CONGRESS
POLI 317
Spring 2010

Rick Wilson MW 8:30 – 9:45
Baker 226, x3352
rkw@rice.edu
http://rkw.rice.edu/
Office Hrs: M W 1-2 T 1:30-2:30 (or by appointment)

The U.S. Congress is despised as an ineffective and ungainly institution. Yet citizens tend to trust their own congressperson (with over 90 percent of incumbents being re-elected). Such is the nature of representation. The Founders established the U.S. Congress as the primary representative institution. Our task this semester is to explore Congress as a representative institution, to understand its complex structure and to explore the ways in which it is being transformed.

We will begin by considering the theoretical underpinnings and historical development of the U.S. Congress in order to more fully understand and evaluate its current status. We will then examine the incentives of contemporary members of congress in the electoral arena. Next we will turn to Congress's internal structure and processes and its links with other political institutions, such as the presidency, parties, and interest groups. Finally, we will focus on the policy process as it unfolds in Congress.

Grades will be based on the following assignments: two examinations (30% each), problem sets (30%), and class participation (10%). You are expected to keep up-to-date with *all* reading assignments and to be prepared to discuss the readings during class. Expect to be called on in class to discuss the readings. The Honor Code is in effect for all class assignments.

Required Stuff.

There is one text: *Congress and Its Members* (12th Ed.) by Roger Davidson, Walter Oleszek and Frances Lee, CQ Press. It is useful. At the same time you will be expected to use electronic documents available from the library or on Owlspace. If you have questions about how to use the Library's resources, please let me know.

In addition, there will be a "lab fee" of $5.00 for this class. During the semester you will be participating in a number of in-class experiments. The experiments will illustrate various facets of the course. The data from the experiments will be posted and you will be asked to "analyze" these data (see the brief discussion of "problem sets" below). Your lab fee will be matched by the instructor. During the experiments you will accumulate "points" that will be earned as a function of your participation in the experiments. At the end of the class the total amount of money (your fee plus what the instructor adds) will be returned to you. You will receive a share of the total pot based on your proportion of the

total points. Your earnings at the end of the course will be calculate by the following formula:

$ Earnings = $ Total Pot * (Your total points/Total points in the experiment)

It is conceivable that you could earn nothing or that you could earn the total amount in the pot. Most likely you will earn some amount in between. If you happen to miss a class on the day in which an experiment is run, you will earn no points that day. However, you will still be able to see the posted data and the problem set attached to the experiment. You will be able to write the assignment for that class period.

Problem Sets.

There will be a number of problem sets to solve over the course of the semester. These problem sets may involve some math and they will certainly involve some analytic thinking. You can expect 8 such assignments over the course of the semester. Problem sets are due at the beginning of the class. The problem sets will be posted on Owlspace.

Other Information.

Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students should contact Disabled Student Services in the Ley Student Center.

My office hours are posted above. However, I am around a great deal, so feel free to drop on by. Before turning up, however, you might want to check to see if I'm in the office. Give me a call or send me an email.

Date	**Topic**	**Readings**
Jan. 11	Introduction (Experiment)	
Jan 13	Constitutional Foundations	Davidson, Oleszek and Lee (Hereafter DOL), *Congress and Its Members*, Chapter 1. The US Constitution, Article I http://www.constitution.org/cons/constitu.htm Madison, The Federalist Papers, Nos. 10, 35, 47, 51, 57, 62 These can be found at: http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa00.htm
Jan 18	MLK Holiday	
Jan 20	Congress – An Historical Overview	Wilson, R. K. 1999. Transition Governance in the United States: Lessons from the First

		Federal Congress. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* **24**, 543-568. DOL, Chapter 2. Cooper, J. and D. Brady. 1981. "Institutional Context and Leadership Style: The House from Cannon to Rayburn." *American Political Science Review*. 75(2): 411-425.
Jan. 25	Contemporary Congress	David Nather 2006. "2006 Legislative Review: A Session Squandered" CQ Weekly, Dec. 18, 2006, p. 3324. http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/weeklyreport109-000002418270 Ferrechio, Susan. "House Democrats Stick With Seniority." *CQ Weekly Online* (December 9, 2006): 3295-3295. http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/weeklyreport109-000002414408 Nather, David. "Same Rules Squabbles, Different Majority." *CQ Weekly Online* (January 6, 2007): 99-99. http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/weeklyreport110-000002423985 Giroux, Greg. "Onward and Upward for the House Majority." *CQ Weekly Online* (November 10, 2008): 3014-3014. http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/weeklyreport110-000002984423 Ota, Alan K. and Michael Teitelbaum. "GOP Picks Ranking Members for 111th." *CQ Weekly Online* (December 15, 2008): 3377-3377. http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/weeklyreport110-000002997731 Davidson, Roger H. "The Advent of the Modern Congress: The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946." Legislative Studies Quarterly 15, no. 3 (1990): 357-73.
Jan. 25	Experiment	

Jan. 27	Contemporary Congress	Kady II, Martin. "New Majority, New Rules." *CQ Weekly Online* (January 6, 2007): 122-124. http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/weeklyreport110-000002424023 Higa, Liriel. "Democrats Restore Parallel Appropriations Jurisdictions." *CQ Weekly Online* (January 6, 2007): 126-126. http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/weeklyreport110-000002424025 Kravitz, Walter. "The Advent of the Modern Congress: The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970." Legislative Studies Quarterly 15, no. 3 (1990): 375-99.
Jan. 27	Problem Set Due	
Feb 1	Spatial Models 1	Krehbiel, K. 1988. "Spatial Models of Legislative Choice." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 13(3): 259-273. (Don't read the entire paper!)
Feb 1	Problem Set	
Feb 3	Spatial Models 2	Ansolabehere, S, J. Snyder and C. Stewart. 2001. "Candidate Positioning in US House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (1): 136-159.
Feb 3	Problem Set Due	
Feb 8	Congressional Perceptions and Motivations	Parker, Glenn R., and Roger H. Davidson. "Why Do Americans Love Their Congressmen So Much More Than Their Congress?" Legislative Studies Quarterly 4, no. 1 (1979): 53-61. Copeland, Gary. 1989 "Why House Members Seek Election to the Senate." Legislative Studies Quarterly 14 (4): 549-565.
Feb 10	Congressional Recruitment	DOL, Chapter 3 Maisel, L. Sandy and Walter J. Stone. 1997. "Determinants of Candidate Emergence in U.S. House Elections: An Exploratory Study." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 22 (1): 79-96.
Feb 15	Experiment	
Feb 15	Congressional Elections – Redistricting	Jost, Kenneth. 2004. "Redistricting Disputes: Should the courts limit partisan gerrymandering?" *CQ Researcher*. 14 (10) March 12, 2004.

		http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2004031200 Wilson, Reid. "State Tectonics: How Redistricting Will Shift the Political Landscape." *Campaigns and Elections*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 32-36, Apr 2008 (2008). Greenblat, Alan. 2010. "Sex Scandals." *CQ Researcher* 20 (3): 49-72.
Feb. 17	Problem Set due	
Feb. 17	Congressional Elections	DOL, Chapter 4 Lau, R. and G. Pomper. 2002. "Effectiveness of Negative Campaigning in US Senate Elections." *American Journal of Political Science*. 46 (1): 47-66.
Feb. 17	EXAM	(Take Home)
Feb 22	Campaign Finance	Billitteri, Thomas. 2008. "Campaign Finance Reform: Have efforts to reign in political donations failed?" *CQ Researcher*. 18: 22 (July 13, 2008). http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2008061300 Perrine, Keith and Alex Knott. 2010. "Court Loosens Campaign Spending Law." *CQ Weekly*. Jan. 25, 2010, p. 238.
Feb 24	District vs. DC	Herrick, R., M. Moore and J. Hibbing. 1994. Unfastening the Electoral Connection: The Behavior of U.S. Representatives When Re-election is No Longer a Factor." *Journal of Politics*. 56(1): 214-227. Fenno, Richard F., Jr. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Political Science Review* 71, no. 3 (1977): 883-917.
Feb. 24	Exam Due	
Mar. 3, 5	Spring Break	No Class
Mar 8	District vs. DC	DOL, Chapter 5
Mar 10	Parties and Organization (House)	Smith, Steven S. 2000. "Positive Theories of Congressional Parties." *Legislative Studies*

		Quarterly. 25 (2): 193-215. Greenblat, Alan. 2007. "Democrats in Congress: have they made a difference since their takeover?" *CQ Researcher*. 17 (22) June 8, 2007. http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2007060800 Zeller, Shawn. "2008 Votes Studies: Party Unity -- Parties Dig In Deep on a Fractured Hill." *CQ Weekly Online* (December 15, 2008): 3332-3335. http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/weeklyreport110-000002997734
Mar. 15	Experiment	
Mar. 15	Parties and Organization (Senate)	Krehbiel, K. 1986. "Unanimous Consent Agreements: Going Along in the Senate." *Journal of Politics*. 48: 306-329. Evans, C. L. 1999. "Legislative Structure: Rules, Precedents, and Jurisdictions." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 24(4): 605-642.
Mar. 17	Parties and Leadership	DOL, Chapter 6 Sinclair, Barbara. 1999. "Transformational Leader or Faithful Agent? Principal-Agent Theory and House Majority Party Leadership." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 24 (3): 421-449.
Mar. 17	Problem Set Due	
Mar. 22	The Institution: Committees 1	DOL, Chapter 7
Mar. 22	Experiment	
Mar. 24	The Institution: Committees 2	Maltzman, Forrest. 1998. "Maintaining Congressional Committees: Sources of Member Support." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 23 (2): 197-218. Maltzman, F. and Smith, S. S., 1994. "Principals, Goals, Dimensionality, and Congressional Committees." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 19 (4): 457-476.

Mar. 24	Problem Set Due	
Mar. 29	The Institution: The Floor	DOL, Chapter 8
Mar. 31	The Institution: Two Body Problem	DOL, Chapter 9 Binder, S. 1999. "The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-96." *American Political Science Review*. 93 (3): 519-533.
April 5	Experiment	
April 5	Congress and the Presidency	DOL, Chapter 10
April 7	Problem Set Due	
April 7	Congress and Bureaucracy	DOL, Chapter 11 McCubbins and Schwartz "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols Versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science*. 28 (1): 165-179.
April 12	Interest Groups	DOL, Chapter 13 Heberlig, Eric S. "Getting to Know You and Getting Your Vote: Lobbyists' Uncertainty and the Contacting of Legislators." Political Research Quarterly 58, no. 3 (2005): 511-20.
April 14	Budget and Domestic Politics	DOL, Chapter 14
April 19	Foreign Policy	DOL, Chapter 15 Peake, Jeffrey S. "Coalition Building and Overcoming Legislative Gridlock in Foreign Policy, 1947-98." Presidential Studies Quarterly, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 67-83, March 2002 (2002). .
April 21	Summary	DOL, Chapter 16
May 5	**Final Exam Due for Graduating Seniors**	(Take Home Exam)
May 5	**Final Exam Due for non- graduating students**	(Take Home Exam)